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SFPD Response to ACLU Arrest Racial Disparity Report

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In one of the local newspapers this morning, it was stated that African Americans are arrested at a far higher rate than whites, according to an ACLU report issued today. This is not so. The San Francisco Police Department does not racially profile. No one is arrested in sufficient numbers for marijuana possession here in San Francisco to substantiate such a claim. In fact, the article even states that there were only 11 people arrested for misdemeanor marijuana possession in all of 2011, Chief Suhr's first year as Chief.

To put this number in context, in 2011, the SFPD made over 23,000 arrests, of which 14,000 were classified as misdemeanors. Today, Chief Suhr reviewed all 11 misdemeanor marijuana arrest reports from 2011. All 11 misdemeanor marijuana charges were secondary to other charges, e.g., outstanding warrants, weapons possession, drunk in public, for which the person (four white males, three black males, two black females, one Hispanic male, and one white female) were arrested and booked.

It is evident that the misdemeanor marijuana arrests cited in the article were made using sound police procedure pertaining to criminal activity and not by racial profiling.

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